

CONTROVERSY,

IN WHICH

IS EXAMINED,

WHETHER

*Every Man may be saved in his owne
Faith and Religion?*

WRITTEN

By *Leonard Lessius* of the Society
of I E S V S.



Permissu Superiorum, M. DC. XIV.

The Printer .

GENTLE Reader, This Appendix of F. Lessius to his Treatise intituled, of Consultation &c. being sent me by a friend translated out of Latin into English, I haue thought it conuenient to impart the same vnto thee in Print: aswell for that it is a Controuersy of great importance and most necessary for thee to know; as also for therein only doth seeme to consist thy euerlasting good or ill. Read it then with attention, and thou shall not (believe me) repent thee of thy labour.

THE



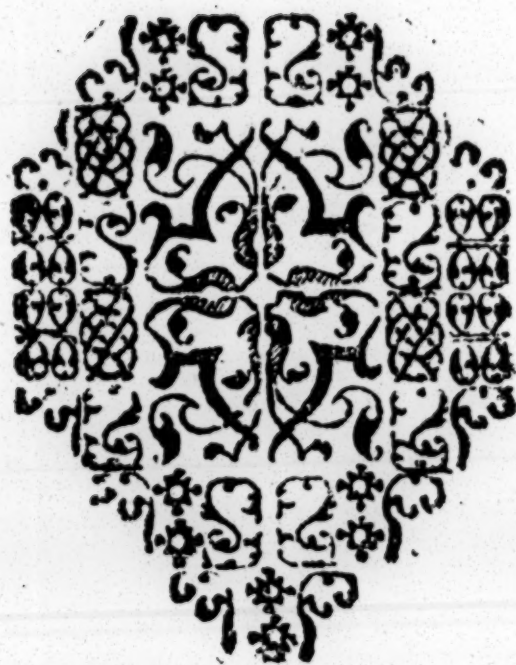
T H E
P R E F A C E .

WE haue before in the Preface of our *Consultation* set downe and briefly confuted a certayne grosse error, which holdeth it i-nough for our saluation to belieue in Christ, and that he died for our sinnes. But because it is much spread, and hath sunke deeply into the minds of many; I was requested to treat of the matter more at large, and therefore now I will deuide it into two seuerall Questions, bringing arguments for ey-ther part.

The first Question shalbe, Whether it be sufficient for saluation to belieue in God, and do no man iniurie? which is as much to say, as, whether euery man may be saued in his owne fayth which he professeth, if therin he endeauour to liue honestly?

The second Question, Whether it be
sufficiēt to saluatiō to belieue in Christ,
and that he dyed for our sinnes,
although we belieue not
many other articles
of fayth ?

THE





T H E

FIRST QUESTION.

CONCERNING the first Question many in these tymes do hold and are of opinion that euery man may be saued in his owne religion, & their principall reason wherwith they are moued to this, is because it seemeth vnto them incredible that all Iewes and Turkes, many of whom do deuoutly worship God, and deale iustly with their neyghbours, should perish for all eternity, only because they haue not believed in Christ, especially since for want of this beliefe they seeme not to deserue much blame, they being from their infancy trayned vp in a religion differēt frō Christianity. For why, say they, should God who would all men to be saued, so strayten the way vnto heauen? why should those miserable souls, who according to their capacity do their best to please him, do wrong to no man, and do lead a iust & honest life, be cōdemned to eternall payne for the ignorāce of that thing wherein they were neuer sufficiently instructed?

The 1. Reason.

But this opinion of theirs, although in natural reason it may seeme to carry some colour of truth and equity, yet considering those things which are reuealed vnto vs in holy Scriptures, it is a meere Paradox. For if euery Turke and Iew may be saued in their beliete, then in vaine haue the Apostles & holy Fathers so much laboured in preaching and planting of the Christian faith. In vaine so many Martyres by all manner and kind of torments haue shed theyr bloud, and spent their life in the confession therof. For they might haue abstayned from this doctrine and profession without any preiudice to their saluation, and haue rested contented with the Iewes in the profession and acknowledging of one God. I add further: Then in vayne was Christ made man; in vayne did he worke so many Miracles, that so he might be acknowledged and belieued to be the Messias and Sauour of the world; in vayne was he crucified, and dyed. For none of all these things was necessary to mans saluation, it being sufficient to send preachers about the world to perswade men the beliefe of one God. After this manner reasoneth the Apostle Gal. 2. *If iustice be by the Law, then in vayne (saith he) is Christ dead,* which is as much to say, if Iustice can be obtayned by the knowledg of one God & obseruation of the Law, in vayne was Christ crucified, because

cause then the death of Christ had not byn necessary for our saluation .

The 2 . Reason .

Besides, hence it must necessarily follow, that the whole Scripture is false, since that it telleth vs how Christ is our Sauour, Mediatour, & Redeemer, & propoundeth him vnto vs as a Propitiatour by faith in his bloud, by whose Sacrifice we are reconcyled vnto God by his bloud, our sinnes are washed away, and with whose faith we are iustified. Neyther is there any other name vnder heauen giuen vnto men in which they ought to be saued. Thus speaketh the holy Scripture: and all this must needes be friuolous and false, if euery man may be saued in his owne Religion.

But some may perhaps object, that Christ is indeed our Redeemer, and that all our good cometh from him, yet his faith notwithstanding is not absolutely necessary. For it is sufficient that we belieue, that all our good cometh & proceedeth from the bountifull goodnesse of God vnto vs, neyther is it needfull for vs to know by what meanes it is bestowed vpon vs.

But this not only repugueth the holy Scripture, but also it is against the reason of the holy Scripture, because the sayd holy Scripture doth euidently teach vs that Christs redemption is not applied vnto vs but by fayth, and therefore, all such as are destitute of the fayth of Christ

are voyde of their iustification , and remayning still guiltie of sinne, are the children of wrath, and in danger of eternall damnation.

It repugneth to reason , because to the end that we may become partakers of any great and vnaccustomed benefit , all reason requireth , that we acknowledge the benefit , and our benefactor , and that we honour him as it becometh vs with all thanks-giuing: for both the cōditiō of the benefit & of our benefactor doth require of vs this gratefulnesse of mind. Seing that therefore the benefit of our redēptiō is so great & vnaccustomed and he who bestowed it vpon vs so great and famous , as also the meanes wherby he bestowed it vpon vs , so strange and meruaylous , it is requisit we should acknowledge all these things , least we should liue and dye vngratefull toward so great a benefactor , and least instead of blessing & thāking him after the manner of the Iewes , we curse & blaspheme him . It is therefore an absurd thing , to esteeme those who do not beleue in Christ , to be partakers of eternall saluation prepared for vs by Christ . The which also by this may be confirmed , because none can be saued who doth not know God , & the benefit of his creatiō , for otherwise all Idolators might be saued: neither therefore can he be saued , who doth not know the benefit of his redemption , because the benefit of our redemption is farre greater and more admirable , and doth more appertayne to the Glory of God , and of Christ our Redecmer , and requireth also of vs
greater

greater honour, seruice, and thanks-giuing.

Neyther is it sufficient for vs to know in generall that all good thinges come vnto vs from God, for this is not sufficient for the honor and gratitude which is dew vnto him, but we must also know what and how great the benefit is, as also by what manner, way, and meanes he bestowed it vpon vs: that is to say, that he hath deliuered vs from sinne, and euerlasting death, and that he hath opened vnto vs the way to eternal life, & that after a most admirable manner, to wit by ioyning our nature vnto his, and by suffering therein death for vs. For this especially commenderh his charity, mercy, and iustice, this also exacteth at our hands all dewty prayse, and thanks-giuing, these therefore are most necessarily to be knowne to saluation.

The 3. Reason.

If euery one may be saued in his owne fayth, then therefore that fayth is sufficient to saluation which is not a gift of God, but an humane perswasion, conceyued by our priuate iudgement, relying vpon humane authority, and built vpon a decciteful foundatiō. For the Turkes, although they belieue one God to be the Creatour of heauen & earth, & to be the rewarder of both good and euill workes, their faith notwithstanding is not of the holy Ghost but of their own priuat iudgment, or rather of the diuell: for they do not belieue so, because God hath reuealed it vnto

to *Whether every man may be saved*
men by any true Prophet, but because Mahomet, whome they thinke to be the Prophet of God, and his iustrument to teach mortall men, hath so set it downe in his Alcoran. Albeit therefore that which they belieue be true, yet becaule the ground of their beliefe & the whole reason therof is false, and pestilent, to wit, that Mahomet is a Prophet of God; the faith it selfe whereby they belieue, is deceytfull, and the foundation therof whereupon it is grounded is hurtfull to saluation, necessarily inclining & forcing the mynde to caste it selfe into all the pestiferous errours of that sect. How therefore can that faith be called sufficient for them vnto saluation, or that they can be saued by that faith? How can that which is vncertayne, deceitefull pestiferours, be made the foundation of our iustice before God, or of eternall saluation?

In like manner, albeit the Iewes do belieue the same, or rather more thinges agreable vnto truth, yet the faith wherby they do belieue them, is deceytfull and voyde of the spirit of God. For the whole reason or cause of their beliefe is, because the Rabbyns and Doctors of their Synagogue, do so interpret the holy Scriptures vnto them. For they are the rule of their beliefe, or which is all one, the holy Scripture, as it is subiect to their interpretation. But this whole reason of their beliefe is deceytfull, and no lesse hurtefull and dangerous then that of the Turkes: for it is no lesse hurtefull to belieue, that their Rabbyns interpreting the holy Scriptures are
in

indewed with the spirit of God, then to belicue that Mahomet is the Prophet of God: neither are they drawne into lesser absurdities by the force of that principle. How therefore can that faith be the foundation, or ground of saluation?

The 4. Reason.

Finally this opinion maketh no difference betwixt Turcisme, Iudaisme, & Christianisme, but in some few indifferent matters, and nothing necessary vnto saluation; in so much that it is all one in what religion thou liuest; seing that thou maist indifferently in all of them obtayne thy saluation; the which is nothing els, but to open the way to Alcoran, and to make Mahomet equall with Christ, or rather manifestly to bring in Atheisme. For to appoue euery Religiõ is to take away all Religion, and to thinke none necessary, seing that the true Religion can be but one.

The fundamentall reason wherupon this opinion especially relieth, is of no moment. For first, if it be not incredible that God for the space of some thousands of yeares hath left the whole world in Idolatry, excepting only the Iewish nation being but a little portiō or corner of the whole world, and to haue permitted it to be viterly overthrowne, albeit there were so many rare wits among them, so many diligent worshippers of God, and all humane iustice, and honesty; it should not also seeme incredible, if we say that

now

now also he suffereth the Turkes and Iewes to perish.

Secondly, the Turkes and Iewes are lesse to be excused now, in that they do not belieue in Christ, then the Heathens were in tymes past in not acknowledging one God to be the Creator of heauen and earth. The reason is, becauie when almost the whole world was in Idolatry the seruēt heat of the common custome carried all by fōrce away with it: neyther was there any reason offered vnto priuate men why they should greatly doubt of their religion: neyther if there had byn doubt objected vnto them, could they find out any easy way to know the truth. But now after that the fayth and Religion of Christ diuulged throughout the whole world, and that Christians are euery where extant, it cannot be, but that many occasions are offered vnto the Turkes and Iewes of doubting of their Religion. They are bound therfore to discusse, and conferre the matter with the Christians dwelling nigh vnto them; the which if they do not, but auert their minds from these kinde of thoughts, by reason of the hatred they beare vnto Christian Religion, or vpon some other cause, they make theselues vnexcusable before God: for the busines of our Religion & saluation is of so great weyght and importance, that it ought to be preferred before all other things, & when there is any iust reason of doubting offered it must withall diligence be examined, albeit we should for that purpose be forced to go into
farre

farre countries for our resolution.

Lastly, if there be any who haue hard nothing of Christian Religiō, or which do thinke that there is nothing wherby they may be iustly moued to any further inquisition, those men shall not be damned for the sin of Infidelity, that is to say, because they haue not belieued in Christ, but for some other things, which they haue done agaynst the law of nature, the which by help of God they might haue eschewed, for God hath not left the so destitute of his prouidence, and help, but that they may auoid those synnes which they do commit, if they would, as they may & ought to cooperate with Gods holy inspirations, and take comfort and pleasure therein. None therefore can impute his damnation vnto God, albeit the way be strait to saluation, but vnto himselfe, to his owne negligence, I say, and wickednesse, wherby he hath neglected Gods holy inspirations, and contemned his profitable admonitiōs, and willingly and wittingly against his owne conscience hath throwne himselfe headlong into sinne, it being his vtter ouerthrow.

THE II. QUESTION.

THE other Question is, whether it be sufficiēt to saluatiō to belieue in Christ, and that he dyed for our sinnes, albeit we will not belieue many other things. Many, especially of the common sort of people

people do esteeme it sufficient, so that those things be belieued which are set downe in the Apostles Creed, of God and Christ, other things they account indifferent, and euery one may belieue what with a good faith he pleaseth, but they will haue the Apostles Creed belieued of euery one, in that sense which seemeth best vnto any of them. They conclude therefore, that any which confesseth Christ may be saued in his owne faith, whether he be a Papist, or a Lutheran, or a Calvinist, or an Anabaptist, or of any other sect, for all these haue the same head, which is Christ, all do rely vpon the same foundation the which is Christ Iesus; they cannot therefore be deceyued of their saluation albeit they disagree in all other things. Hereupō some noble men who do vse these new religions to the establishment and encrease of their power & dominions doe labour very much to make one Church of the Lutherans and Calvinists, and they goe about to perswade vs, that there is noe difference amongst them, but in some smal points & indifferent matters.

But this opinion doth include in it many inconueniences.

The 1. Reason.

First, because it saueth almost all the auncient Heretikes: for most of them do confesse Christ & belieue the Creed in their owne sense. The Arians therefore might be saued in their
heresy

heresy who denyed God the Sonne to be consubstantiall with his Father, The Macedonians who made the holy Ghost lesler then God the Sonne. The Nestorians who affirmed there were two persons in Christ. The Eutichians who held, that the flesh of Christ was conuer-
ted into his diuinity. The Apollinaristes who said, that the diuine Worde was vnited in Christ, as a reasonable soule vnited to the body. The Monothelites, who affirmed that there was one only wil and operation in Christ. The Pelagians, who denied originall sinne, and taught that a man by his naturall forces might deserue the grace of God, and his saluatiō. The Donatists who affirmed, that the Church of God was euery wher perished, but only in Donatus his company. The Nouatians who denyed pennance to those that had denyed their fayth. The Montanists who thought Montanus to be the holy Ghost. All these according to this opinion euery one in his owne fayth and heresy may be saued, because they haue belieued in Christ, and did hold the Apostles Creed no lesse to be belieued, thē now a dayes the Lutherans & Caluinists do. But what can be sayd more absurd or more like a paradox in the Church of God? For if eternall saluatiō may be obtayned by this kind of fayth, why haue there byn holden so many Councells against those heresies, the Bishops through-out the whole world being assembled together with so great labour and charges? why haue those heresies byn often con-
dem-

demned by excommunication? why haue the holy Fathers so much laboured in the extirpation thereof? why haue Catholikes so much detested the conuersation and company of those heretykes? why would some of them rather chosen to suffer banishment, death, and all kind of torments then to subscribe vnto any of these heresies? All these things truly had byn done in vayne, foolishly, and wrongfully, if in these sects eternall saluatiō might haue byn obtained: the which seing no wise man can say, we must of necessity confesse, that those heresies are the plagues of soules, and that saluation can by no meanes consist with them.

The 2. Reason.

Secondly, because it condemneth all antiquity of error, who hath alwayes iudged, that an heretike cannot be saued, and therefore, it hath opposed it selfe so vehemently against them, and hath alwayes very diligently confuted them.

The 3. Reason.

Thirdly, because it condemneth the Apostle himselfe, who in his third to *Titus* commandeth vs in this sort: Eschew an heretike after one or two admonitions, knowing certaynly, that he which is such a one, is ouerthrown, and sinneth being condemned by his owne proper iudgmēt. Why doth he command him to be eschewed, if
hi

his error be not a hindrance to saluation? why doth he say, that he is ouerthrowen and cōdemned? In like manner in his 2. to Tim 3. *Their speech (sayth he) creepeth as a canker.* Euen as therefore the cāker is a disease which killeth a mans body vlesse it be cut away, euen so is an heretike vnto a company of Christians and Catholikes.

But some peradventure will obiect, and say, that none is to be accōted an heretike but he which reiecteth Christ or denyeth some thing belōging vnto the Creed. But this is absurdly, & vnwisely spoken, for so he should not be an heretike who should take away both the old, and new testament, and should say, that those things are eyther feygned, or written by the spirit only of a man, and as the writings of prophane authors subiect to many errors: he were not an heretike who should deny hell, or the eternity of the paynes thereof, or should affirme that all the diuells should once be saued, seing that there is no mention made of these things in the Apostles Creed: he should not be an heretike who should forbid marriage, and who should say that marriages were ordeyned by the Diuell, who also should affirme that some kinde of flesh is of it owne nature vncleane; all whom notwithstanding the Apostle iudgeth to be heretikes 1. Tim. 4. He were not an heretike, who should say that there are two persons in Christ, whom notwithstanding S. Iohn calleth an heretike, and Antichrist Epist. 1. c. 4. He were not an heretike who should deny Baptisme, and all other Sacraments. And finally none of those of whome

we haue spoken before, were to be accounted Heretikes, the which is contrary to all antiquity, & all the Doctors who haue liued in these ten or twelue ages.

The 4. Reason.

Fourthly, this opinion doth make all the foresayd heresyes, and sects equall with the Catholike faith and Religion, affirming that we may alwell be saued in them as in it. The Catholike Religion therefore shall be no better then Arrianisme, Pelagianisme, Nestorianisme, Eutichianisme, & other false Religions, the which both in it selfe is most absurd, and is nothing els but to induce a new Atheisme. For to affirme all Religions to be good, and that it litle importeth the worke of our Saluation what Religion we professe, is to make no account of any Religion, for if there be any Religion it cannot be but one, as there is but one truth, one Iustice, one Faith, one happines, one Lord and God, & one Man Iesus Christ, mediator of God and man.

The 5. Reason.

Fifthly, it is a skornefull thing to say that it is sufficient for euery one to belieue the Creed according to their owne sense and vnderstanding therof, seing there is but one only truth, the which if we do not attayne, we belieue that which is false: but a false faith auayleth nothing to saluation. It is therefore all one whether thou belieuest the Creed after such a manner or after no manner at all: one therefore may be saued albeit he doth not absolutely belieue many articles. The same also
may

may be said of the holy Scriptures. For if it be sufficient to believe the holy Scriptures understood in their owne sense, seeing that this sense may often tymes be erroneous; it will also suffice albeit thou dost not believe them at all, for a false faith can be no more needfull to saluation then no faith at all, that is to say, whereby one doth absolutely believe nothing at all.

Yf thou dost say, that the Creed must be believed in a true sense, then thou condemnest all the sects of this tyme, whereof there is none which believeth all the articles of the Creed in the same sense with Catholikes, or which doth not differ one from another in the explication of the Creed. Wherefore seeing that there is but only one truth, it necessarily followeth that all Religions saving one doe erre from the truth & therefore are not sufficient to saluation.

But it is evident, that they differ much in the vnderstanding of the Creed, for that Article, *And in Iesus Christ his only sonne*, the Arrians, Trithetans, and many Calvinistes affirming the Sonne lesser then the Father, doe otherwise explicate then the Lutherans, and Catholikes do, who hold God the Sonne to be equall and consubstantiall with his Father. The article of *Christs descending into hell*, the Calvinists do otherwise vnderstand, who do thinke that Christ suffered there the torments of the damned soules, and that he doubted of his saluation, and that he was affrayd least he should be wholly consumed by euerlasting death: otherwise Catholikes and Lutherans, who say, that such an exposition is

not the sense of the Article, but a blasphemy of
of Calvin. The article of *Christs ascending into hea-
uen*, is otherwise vnderstood, by the Lutherans,
and Vbiquitarists who hold Christs body to
be present euery where and in all places, as his
diuinity is present euery where: otherwise the
Caluinists and Catholiks who doe not doubt to
affirme but y^t by this expositiō the whole Creed
is ouerthrowne, and that Christs Incarnation,
Natiuity, Passion, death, ascending to heauen,
and his comming to Iudgment is thereby quit
taken away. The article of *iudging the quicke, and
the dead*, the Catholikes do otherwise expound,
who hold that God shall so iudge vs that he will
reward our good workes with heauen, and pu-
nish our euill deeds with hell: otherwise the
Caluinists, and Lutherans, who deny all re-
ward to good workes, and that God only in his
diuine iudgement will principally esteeme, and
reward a speciall fayth only. The article of *the
holy Ghost*, the Chatholikes, and Lutherans do
otherwise vnderstand then the Arrians, and ma-
ny Calvinists. The article of *the Church*, the Lu-
therans and Calvinists do vnderstand of the in-
uisible congregation of those which are prede-
stinatē: the Catholikes do vnderstand it of the
visible company of Catholiks, wherein many
are predestinated, many are reprobated. The ar-
ticle of *Communion of Saynts*, the Lutherans,
and Calvinists do so extenuate that they take a-
way almost all the communion holden by Ca-
tholiks. The article of *remission of Syns*, they
explicate of not imputation only, not acknow-
ledging

ledging any inward renouation by inherent iustice, and the infused gifts of God, after which manner the Catholikes do hold that sinnes are forgiuen.

By these it is manifest, how great a difference there is in the vnderstanding of the Creed. Seing therefore that there is but only one truth, & this in our Consultation we haue shewed to be among Catholikes, it necessarily followeth that all other sects do hold a false doctrine, and fayth of the Creed. If therefore a true fayth of the Creed be necessary, it cannot possibly be that euery one may be saued in his owne fayth, and Religion. If a false fayth suffice, how can a false fayth help vs to saluation?

The 6. Reason.

Sixtely, the holy Scripture is of no lesse authority then the Apostles Creed, neyther doth he a lesse iniury vnto God, who denyeth any thing clearly expressed in holy Scripture, then he which reiecteth some article of the Creed: there is therefore no reason why fayth should be restrayned vnto the Creed only, and that we may belieue at our pleasure in all other things what we like, seing that we are no lesse bound to belieue all thinges conteyned in holy Scripture then the articles of the Creed: for albeit we are no bound to know distinctly all such things as are in holy Scripture, we are bound notwithstanding in generall to belieue all thinges; in-
somuch that without the sinne of heresy we may not reiect as false and doubtfull, any
B 3 thing

thing conteyned therein. By what colour therefore or probability can it be said, that it litle importeth, how in other matters thou belieuest, soe that thou belieue still in Christ and his Creed. Why must the Creed rather be still kept then all the holy Scripture, seing that the authority of the Creed is no greater then that of the holy Scripture? this fancy truly is very foolish and simple, and altogether voyde of any good ground wheron it may rely.

The 7. Reason.

Seauently, in euery act of faith we must not only regarde what we do belieue, but also and that principally, vpon what ground we belieue, and what is the whole reason of our beliefe; for of what kinde the motiue or reason of our beliefe is, of the same is our faith: if it be certayne and infallible, our faith will also be certayne and infallible: if it be vncertaine, our faith also wil be vncertaine, and subiect to error, as for example sake: The Turke belieueth there is one God Creator of all thinges, because his Alcoran doth teach him so, the which he thinketh to be written by the spirit of God: his faith albeit he belieue that which is true, relyeth vpon a false and deceytfull reason, by the force whereof he is moued to belieue many false and blasphemous thinges, as that there are not three Persons in the B. Trinity, and that Christ is not God, and that Christ is inferiour to Mahomet, and that Circumcision and the like are still to be kept. That faith therefore by reason of the
founda-

foundation is both deceitfull and hurtfull: the same hapneth vnto al heretikes; the which being supposed I vrge the argument in this manner.

That faith which relyeth vpon a false foundation, albeit it beleueth some things which are true, cannot be sufficient to saluation: but the faith of al the sects of this tyme relieth vpon a false foundation; it cannot be therefore sufficient for saluation. The first proposition is manifest in it selfe, for how can that which is deceitfull and vncertayne be the foundation of our eternall saluation? How can the true Religion whereby we please God, be grounded in a false deceitfull faith? Truly it is no lesse repugnant to reason, then if thou shouldest say, that truth is grounded vpon lyes, wisdom vpon error, and vertue vpon folly.

The second proposition, to wit, that all sects are grounded vpon a false and deceitfull foundation, I proue in this manner: for cyther they belicue their opinions for the authority of their Apostles Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Zwinglius &c. whom they iudge to be endewed with the spirit of God, or because euery one of them in their owne priuate iudgement do beleue those things to be cōteyned in holy Scripture, or lastly because their owne priuate spirit doth inwardly testify vnto them, that those things are true, or that this is the meaning of holy Scripture: for whatsoeuer the sectes of these tymes do belicue they are moued therevnto by one of these three reasons, and they appoint one of them to be the foundation or reason of their

beliefe, but these foundations, and reasons be altogether false and deceitfull.

As for the first reason, to wit the authority of Luther, Calvin, and the rest who first inuented these new Religions, that it is deceitfull, it is manifest, because we see by experience that both they might, and haue byn often deceyued, for they haue reuoked many things, corrected many things, and in many things haue they contradicted themselues, as hath byn declared in our Consultation of Religion in the 9 Consideratiō, and the sixt reason. Hence it commeth to passe that few now adayes will rely vpon their authority, because they say, they were men, and therefore subiect to error, wherfore their followers also do leaue them at their owne pleasure when they thinke they haue found any thing fitter for their purpose: their authority therfore is deceitfull, & vncertayne, euen by the iudgement of their owne schollers, and followers.

Neyther is the other, to wit, the priuate iudgement, whereby they expound the holy Scripture, lesse deceitfull: for many false things by that priuate iudgement seeme to be true, & many things which before seemed true are afterward iudged false. Fro hence ariseth so great variety & incōstancy in many of the cōcerning matters of faith, because indeed mans iudgement is weake, especially in the mysteries of our fayth, and the vnderstanding of holy Scripture, the which far exceedeth the reach of mans wisdom and reason.

Many do answere, that they do not rely vpon their iudgment in matters of fayth, but vpon the
holy

holy Scriptures which cannot erre, wherein how miserably they are decciued by this appeareth, because almost all the sects do say that they rely vpon holy Scripture, whereas notwithstanding they differ among themselves in most of the matters, one teaching contrary vnto another, the which could by no meanes come to passe, if they did not rely vpon their owne iudgments, but vpon the lawfull and common vnderstanding of the holy Scriptures, for the holy Scripture is no where contrary vnto it selfe, neyther doth it any where disagree frō it selfe: that therefore they so greatly iarre & disagree among themselves, is caused, by that they make a sēse to the holy Scripture according to their owne priuate iudgment, the which is diuersly framed by them, according to the diuersity of iudgmēt & vnderstanding among them: they rely therefore vpon the holy Scripture, not as it is interpreted by the Catholik Church & the holy Fathers, but as they in their priuate iudgment do interpret it, for the vertu & force of the holy Scripture doth not only consist in the bare words, but in the sense and meaning thereof, but the priuate iudgment inuenteth this sense, and ioyneth it to the words of the Scripture as lyfe vnto the body: the whole reason of their fayth therefore is their priuate iudgmēt, the which how deceitfull oftē tymes it is, may easily be declared by the disagreement of so many sects, for it is all one whether thou saist, that thou reliest vpon Scripture as it is interpreted by thy proper iudgmēt, or y^t thou reliest vpon thy owne iudgmēt precisely in it self.

Finally, the third reason whereupon many

now a dayes do rely, is most deccitful & skornful of all, a manifest signe wherof is that among the Anabaptists, which aboue all others are guyded by the instinct of the spirit, there is the greatest variety of sects, & disagreement of faith, the which could not be, but that the spirit wherupon they rely, & by whome they are gouerned is deccitful & variable. The same also is to be seene among Calvinists, and Lutherans, & amongst their sects & diuers factions, for their owne opinion is certayne & euident vnto euery one of the by the testimony of their owne priuate iudgment, the which inwardly teacheth euery one of them and assevereth the testimony of truth vnto euery one of them, whereby it is manifest that this spirit is not the holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, who cannot teach contraries, or be opposite vnto it selfe, but it is a wicked spirit, the spirit of error who is a lyar from the beginning & the father of lyes, who worketh in the children of incredulity, of whome the Apostle saith, *Because they haue not receiued the charity of truth, he will therefore send them the operation of error, that they may belieue in lyes.* And in other place. *In the last dayes there shall some depart from their faith attending to the spirits of error, and doctrines of the diuells. For euery heresy is the doctrine of the Diuells.* And S. Iohn saith, *Do not belieue euery spirit, but try their spirits whether they be of God or not. For many false Prophets are gone out into the world.*

This therefore is the spirit which beareth rule in the harts of heretiks, whose testimony & operation they feele inwardly egrafted in their harts, & yet they thinke it to be the worke of the holy Ghost

Ghost, who so blindeth & peruerteth their mind, & ranſies, that they iudge light to be darkneſſe, & darkneſſe light, y^e they think the moſt clear truth of the Catholike faith to be an error, & moſt filthy errors to be the cleare truth. And truly if they were not wholly blinded & bewitched, they might eaſily perceiue that ſpirit whom they feele inwardly, not to be the ſpirit of God, or at the leaſt they might begin to doubt therof, ſeing that all ſects among whom there is ſo great diſſention & variety of opiniōs, do al equally feele, boaſt of & follow y^e teſtimony of this ſpirit, & rely vpon it in the cōfirmatiō of their moſt cōtrary opiniōs: but this hapneth by the iuſt iudgmēts of God: for as y^e Iewes who would not receiue Chriſt were permitted to be blinded by the diuell, as it is manifeſt by the *Apoſt. 2. ad Theſ. 2.* ſo heretiks becauſe they haue forſakē the Catholik fayth (the which is no leſſe fault thē that of the Iewes) are deliuered vnto him that he may as it were bewitch their minds & driue them into all kinds of error.

But if any will attentiuely conſider he ſhal eaſily perceyue a more potēt operatiō of the diuell & bewitching of mindes in our Heretiks thē eyther in Iewes or Mahometās, & y^e for two reaſōs. Firſt becauſe the Iewes agree in the ſame faith, neither is there any variety of ſects among them: among the Mahometes there are only two ſects & there is no great difference betwixt them. But among heretiks of theſe tymes there are many ſects, ſome ariſing by the ēcrease of new opiniōs, who condemne one another of heresy, & all theſe are riſen within the ſpace of 90. yeares, the w^{ch} is a
ma

manifest signe, y^t the diuel meruaylously possel-
leth inwardly the hartes of these men, troubling
their fancies, peruerting their imaginatios & iudg-
mēts, y^t they cānot remayn or be quiet any wher.

Secondly, because the cōmon sort of people a-
mong the Iewes & Turkes do not rely vpon their
owne iudgmēt, or vpon the testimony & instinct
of the priuat spirit, but vpon the iudgmēt of their
doctors, or (w^{ch} is all one) vpon their owne Scri-
pture, as it is interpreted vnto thē by the doctors
of their Religion; they haue therefore the rule of
their faith & ground of their beliefe cōformable
as it were to natural reason, that is to say the cō-
mon cōsent of their predecessors, or the Scripture
explicated vnto thē by the cōsēt of the doctors of
their Religion. But most of the heretikes of these
tymes do not respect their Superiors & Apostles
frō whom they first receiued this new Ghospel,
but they forsake thē as men subiect to error, and
they rely wholly vpon their owne iudgment, or
vpon the testimony of the priuat spirit, or w^{ch} is
al one, vpon the holy Scripture vnderstood accor-
ding to the sense of their owne iudgmēt & priuat
spirit, the w^{ch} is an euident signe, that Sathā doth
so effectually worke in them and bewitch their
myndes, that not only euery one feygneeth vnto
himselſe new heresies & opiniōs, but also that he
placeth the foundation of his beliefe & rule of
faith in himself, & in his owne inward sense &
iudgement: for euery one thinketh himself to be
taught by our Lord & indued with the Magi-
stery of the spirit, albeit they be womē & yong
girlcs, & therefore to be free from error, but all the
holy

holy Fathers to haue byn men subiect to errors. The same they iudge of their Apostles & Ministers. But what greater bewitching or deceiuing of people can there be, then this? Hence it cometh to passe that they haue no certaine & established opiniōs amongst thē, neyther can they see downe or frame any body of doctrine & religiō, but they must wander vp & downe in vncertain-tyes, as the priuate spirit leadeth thē; neyther can there any disputatiō be made wth thē cōcerning their opinions, seing that they do not defend any one opiniō, they being by reason of the ignorāce of their predecessors altogether vnlearned. But of this spirit of folly & madnesse we haue writtē more at large in our Consultation in the 9. consideration the 11. reason.

By these it is manifestly cōcluded that all the ground & foundation of faith wherupon the sects of our tymes relye, is false & vncertaine, and therefore their faith which relyeth thereon is vnprofitable & auayleth nothing to saluation.

The 8. Reason.

Eightly, if euery one, who do acknowledge Christ may be saued in their owne faith, Why is there so great disagreemēt among religions? Why do they excommunicate & condemne one another of heresy? Why do y^e Lutherās refuse to acknowledge the Caluinists for their brethren: & in their publike sermōs & books do call them wicked & blasphemous persons? Why do the chiefe of the Caluinists, amōg whome Theodore Beza, y^e Father of thē all, & as it were their Pope next after Calvin, handle the Lutherās in like māner?

why

why do the Anabaptists call those only of their owne sect, to be the faithfull, and Christians, & account all others as infidels? wherby it is euident that this new opinion of doctrine is not only contrary to Catholike religion, but to all other sects also who haue in them any zeale of piety and religion, and to be banished as Atheists only.

The 9. Reason.

Ninthely, that any man be saued, it sufficeth not to keepe only one, two, or three cōmandmēts, but it is necessary to keepe all, according to those words of Christ *Matth. 19. If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments*. As if any be an adulterer or thiefe, albeit he keep y^e other cōmādmēts he may not be saued, as the holy Scripture oftē teacheth. In like māner therefore it is not sufficiēt to saluation to belecue two, three, or fower articles, but it is necessary to belieue al those things w^{ch} God hath reuealed and set downe to vs in his Church to be belieued, for faith is no lesse necessary to saluatiō then obediēce of the cōmandments of the law of God: neither should faith be lesse perfect thē the obedience & keeping of the law of God. As therefore obediēce must extend it selfe to al the commandments, so must faith extend it selfe to al things which are reuealed; the which may be cōfirmed by the words of *S. Iames* in the 2. Chap. *Who soeuer hath kept the whol law, but offēdeth in one, he is made guilty of all: for he who sayd, thou shall not commit adultery, said also thou shall not kil, as if he should say he is made guilty of al & shall be punished as a breaker of the whol law, because he hath despised the law-maker, who is the author of the whole law.* In like

māner therfore he which shall deny one article although he belieue al the rest is made guilty of violating his whole faith & Religion, because he contemneth God who is the first truth, who no lesse reuealed this then the other: he contemneth the Catholike Church the spouse of Christ, who is the pillar & strength of truth, wherby he hath no lesse determined we should belieue this then y^e other. And this is the reasō why he is no lesse an heretike who with pertinacy denieth one point of faith, thē he which denieth a hundred, because in that he denieth one, he contēneth God, who is the first truth & did reueale it, he contemneth the authority of the Church the w^{ch} did propose it vnto vs, he maketh y^e Church subiect to error & a liar, wherby he is made also vncertaine of al the rest, & looseth all his diuine faith: for the ground of his diuine faith being taken away his whole faith must needs perith & cōsequētly there remaineth only an opiniō or humane fayth, subiect to error wherby he belieueth all the rest.

The 10. Reason.

Tenthly & lastly this opiniō is very dāgerous in y^e practise therof, for it maketh a man that he careth not what religiō he hold, what he belieueth or not belieueth, he doth not therfore seeke after y^e truth, & he doth as easily & with as great security lay hold on false as true things, yet al mē not oly Catholiks but euē the more principal sects, & those w^{ch} are learned wise men do absolutely affirme y^t none can be saued without the true faith & religiō, & whosoever are deprived therof shal perish for cuer. The followers therfore of this
opi-

opiniō are cōdemned of all, & they only promise vnto theselues saluatiō without any author, testimony or reasō for it, relying & trusting oīly in their own vain imagiatiō of their foolish brain: let the therefore heare out of *S. Fulgētius* what antiquity hath alwaies holdē, & what the Catholike Church hath taught in al ages. Thus therefore he writeth, setting downe the rules of our common faith in his booke of *Fayth ad Petrum Diaconum*, the 38. Cap. *Belieue assuredly (saich he) and doubt nothing at all, that not only all Pagans, but also all Iewes, Heretikes and Schismatikes who shall dy out of the Catholike Church shal go into euerlasting fire which is prepared for the diuel & his Angells. And in the 39. Cap. Belieue assuredly and doubt nothing, that euery heretik or Schismatik christned in the name of the Father, & of the sōne, & of the holy Ghost, if he be not within the nūber of those which ar of the Catholik Church, what almes soeuer he hath made, albeit he shall shed his bloud for the name of Christ, can by no meanes be saued: for neyther baptisme, nor large & charitable almes, nor death it selfe suffered for Christes sake will auayle that man, who doth not hold the vntity of the Catholik Church, as long as his hereticall or schismaticall wickeānesse which lea- deth to perdition, shall continue in him.*

This hath always byn the faith of the Catho- like Church, & the most certayne & vndoubted doctrine of the holy Fathers: the which I would to God al those who remayne out of the Church of God would attentiuely & diligently consider; they would truly easily perceiue in how dange- rous a state they continue. Thou, O Christ, being the light of the world, shyne vnto their myndes & lighten their hartes. Amen.

FINIS.

C

V I

Whic
byn

Taken
vnt
Mi

inquire
olo
eu
and
sto

Permi